



Caucus Conundrum

Student experiences role as precinct captain

The blinding, hot lights blared down on hundreds of sweaty faces in a crowded barn. It was caucus night, and the barn was packed full of eager caucus attendees, each with their hand raised above their head. It was a mess, and senior Kate Irwin was responsible for keeping everything in order.

Irwin was the precinct captain at the Simpson Barn in Johnston. She was given the task of counting hundreds of people. She had to complete this task correctly in order to have a fair count. Her solution was to have people raise their hands, and then give each person a high five. When she gave a person a high five, they were told to put their hand down to show that they had been counted.

As a precinct captain Irwin was in charge of accounting for the people in her location, and doing whatever she had to do to keep her candidate viable. She and another captain made a deal in order to keep Bernie Sanders' support afloat. "The Hillary precinct captain and I both decided to give some of our delegates to Martin O'Malley to keep him viable" Irwin said. "The other captain did not keep that promise and I received a majority of the O'Malley delegates."

In order to claim the position of precinct captain, Irwin volunteered for Sanders over the summer. She spent a lot of time doing cold calls, where she would call people and ask for their support in the upcoming elections. She also did voter ID calls. She would call each person in the precinct, ask if they were going to be attending the caucus and keep a record of the total caucus attendees.

Upon completing these tasks, Irwin was asked by her leaders if she wanted to be a precinct captain. "When they asked me, I did not know what I would be doing, but I said yes anyway," Irwin said. Although Irwin went into the caucus with no idea what she had to do, by the end, she was in control and had successfully made it through her first round of caucuses.

The caucus was a new experience for senior Jackson Cunningham. "It was a lot different than I expected, it was very unorganized. There were people everywhere and nobody really knew what to do," Cunningham said. Irwin and Cunningham supported Sanders, mostly because of how he wanted to make life easier for high school and college students. Junior Madelyn Stoen also supported Sanders. "Bernie has stood against the same ideas for 50 plus years, and he is very strong about racial and gender equality, which is something that I also stand for strongly," Stoen said. Her experience at the caucus was very crazy and full of yelling and arguing. The caucus had a positive effect on both Stoen and Irwin despite their different experiences. They both enjoyed the caucus.

"I love the Bernie campaign and it's an important part of my life," Irwin said. She had an eye-opening experience at the caucus. "I learned that there are some really nice people, and some people who don't follow their word," Irwin said.



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Captions by: Madelyn Vajgrt & Makenzie Hill
Spread by: Helen Moritz
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Dominant. Senior Kate Irwin counts the voters in her corner for presidential candidate Bernie Sanders at the Iowa caucus. Her precinct met at the Simpson Barn. "To be sure I counted everyone, I had each person raise their hand and I gave each person a high five," Irwin said. "That way I could visually see who hadn't been counted yet." (Photo by Ashley Long)

1. At his youth group convention at New Hope Assembly of God, senior Drew Hendrickson tries out bubble soccer. "I've never done it before and I was really excited to play and run into people," he said. (Photo by Makenzie Hill)

2. Sophomore Boston Grimes guards sophomore Bowen Sandquist during the intramural on Dec. 12. "It's fun being with your friends in a competitive setting," Sandquist said. (Photo by Ashley Long)

3. Seniors Kyle Clancy, Brogan Kearney, Eric Friesth and Zachary Haynes join with junior Luke Safris to sing happy birthday to business teacher Tim Brickley. "A few teachers asked some choir to perform for him to celebrate his 40th birthday," Safris said. (Photo by Kate Lichter)

4. Juniors Bre Beierle, Grace Welch, Allison Tallman and Sophia Nelson look at their agenda for the Drake Ducurs field trip. They listened to several speakers including, Science Guy Bill Nye. (Photo by Corrina Iler)

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